

*A Maker of Useful Images. The Litografía del Estado of Buenos Aires between Republicanism and Market Economy (1829-1838)*

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ABSTRACT

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This paper analyses the activities of the *Litografía del Estado* in Buenos Aires, and its ambivalent relationship with the governments of Juan Manuel de Rosas. This story is read in the light of two wider phenomena affecting the Atlantic world: the diffusion of new forms of visual politicisation linked to republicanism and the construction of interconnected and interdependent market economies. The lithography permitted and was sustained by the two aforementioned processes.

**Keywords:** Visual culture, Political practises, Market intermediaries, César Hipólito Bacle, Juan Manuel de Rosas.

Este ensayo analiza las actividades de la Litografía del Estado en Buenos Aires y su ambivalente relación con los gobiernos de Juan Manuel de Rosas. Esta historia se lee a la luz de dos fenómenos más amplios que afectaron al mundo atlántico: la difusión de nuevas formas de politización visual vinculadas al republicanism and la construcción de economías de mercado interconectadas e interdependientes. La litografía permitió y se sustentó en los dos procesos mencionados.

**Palabras clave:** cultura visual, prácticas políticas, intermediarios de mercado, César Hipólito Bacle, Juan Manuel de Rosas.

## Introduction

On December 1st, 1828, Buenos Aires was shaken by winds of rebellion. The provincial government of the federalist Manuel Dorrego had just signed a peace treaty with Brazil, that ended the war, but paved the way for the definitive independence of the province of the Banda Oriental (contemporary Uruguay) from Buenos Aires. Supporters of the unitarian party, which had started the war back in 1825, did not accept the peace, and entered Buenos Aires in arms led by the general Juan Lavalle. Dorrego fled the city, but a few days later he decided to fight against the rebel army in Navarro. The federalist forces succumbed, Dorrego was arrested and executed on December 13th.

Dorrego's death caused a great stir in the province. Although the level of political confrontation between *unitarios* and *federales* had been very high, an event of such gravity as the shooting of the governor in office had never occurred. In August 1829, the *federales* led by Juan Manuel de Rosas regained control of the province, and the memory of Dorrego's sacrifice became a cornerstone of the new government's political legitimacy. Indeed, the attempt to use the memory of Dorrego as a source of political support, especially among the highly politicised population of the province, had begun soon after the governor's death.

In December 1828, Don Mariano Lozano, a fervent federalist, had in fact commissioned the lithographer César Hipólito Bacle to print Dorrego's last letters, which were to be distributed at his funeral. The police authority blocked this project, but the papers were nevertheless printed the following year, as part of the *Album de homenaje al Coronel Don Manuel Dorrego*, published by the same lithography. In addition to the letters, this work included four lithographs depicting the governor, his grave and scenes from his funeral. The federalist government wanted to achieve order in the province, coalescing Buenos Aires population political support around the memory of the coronel, and the printing technologies were a necessary means to do so. In a speech at the funeral, that would be printed in copies by Bacle, Juan Manuel de Rosas highlighted how the lawful new government had restored order also thanks to the support of the population, as "the Homeland, the honour and the religion have been satisfied today, paying the last honours to the *first magistrate of the Republic*, sentenced to die in the silence of the laws. The darkest stain in the history of the Argentinians has been washed away with the tears of a just, grateful and sensitive people" (El Lucero, 23 Dec. 1829).

The new nineteenth-century media played a fundamental role in the political life of the South American republics born from the disintegration of the Spanish empire as they allowed printing in series images and texts. The aim of this article is to describe the story of the first lithography of Buenos Aires and to show

how its production was used by the Buenos Aires governments between 1829 and 1838. The state had a governmental interest in the lithography: on the one hand, printed goods contributed in sustaining political support for the federalist governments through the fostering of a particular republican visual culture based on the portraits of past and present political leaders, on repeated mottos and on chromatic characterization of the political regime (the widespread adoption of the red *punzò*); on the other hand, the lithography created what sociology has labelled “market intermediaries” (Callon 1998), objects that supported the establishment of the legal framework of a market economy (such as contracts, maps, and especially a register of cattle trademarks) - which was the economic order supported and sought by the government.

The activities of the Bacle lithography in Buenos Aires will be analysed in order to interpret this experience as an expression of two interconnected processes that were affecting the wider Atlantic world, namely the diffusion of new forms of visual politicisation linked to republicanism and the construction of interconnected and interdependent market economies. The first section is dedicated to the description of the activities of the lithography, and of the Janus-faced relationship between Bacle and political power. The second section analyses the political use of printed goods by federalist governments, as a new political practise however in line with the local and Atlantic republican tradition. Finally, the final section is devoted to the description of the political-economic function of lithography, i.e. how its printed products acted as market intermediaries that helped to institutionalise the rules of a market economy in the province of Buenos Aires, integrated with the Atlantic capitalist market.

The contribution to the literature of this piece is twofold. On the one hand, the activities of the lithography and the political use of images in Buenos Aires are placed in their wider Atlantic context, stressing the similarities in political culture between the Río de la Plata and other Atlantic localities. On the other hand, the interpretation of Bacle’s story from the point of view of economic sociology shows how lithography produced printed goods that acted as market intermediaries, instrumental in institutionalising a market economy and in spreading the commodity form. The discussion wants to show how the political and economic function of Bacle’s printed goods are inseparable from each other, and how this story is an example of the interrelated character of the political and economic change that Atlantic societies were witnessing in the 19th century.

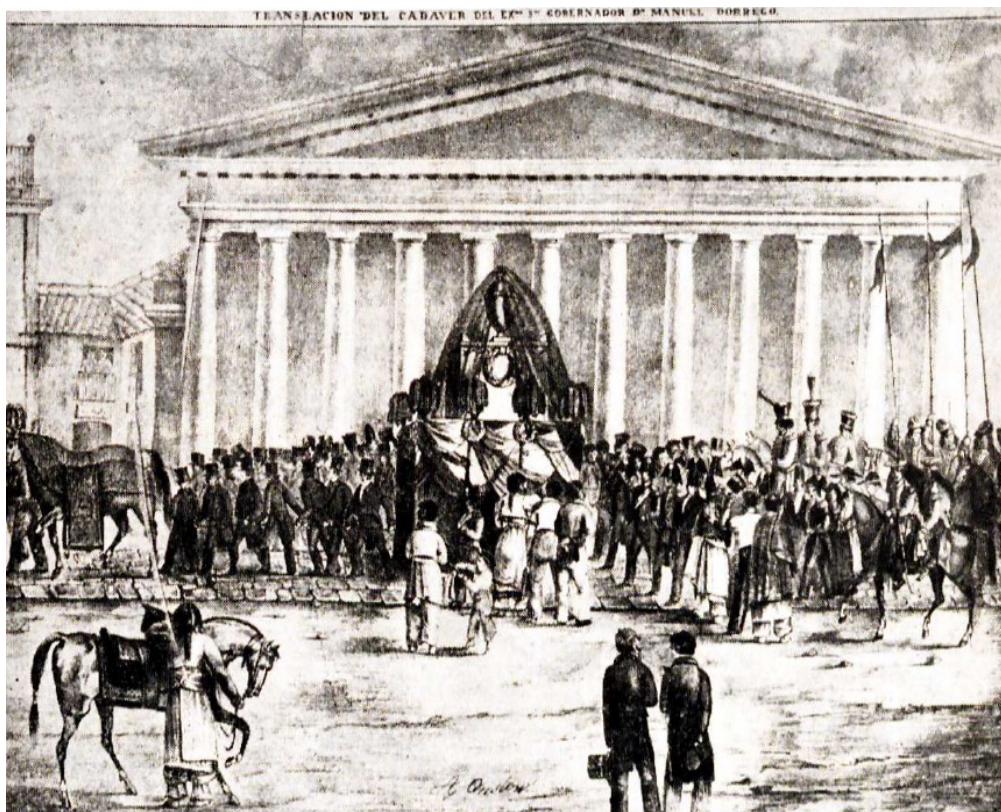


Image 1. Arthur Onslow, *Traslación del cadáver del Exmo. Gobernador Dn. Manuel Dorrego*, 1830.

### The first lithography in the Río de la Plata

Lithography was invented in Germany in 1796, and it soon became one prominent printing technology, as it was preferred to typography especially for the possibility of combining printed text and images on the same page. Starting from the Age of Revolutions, European societies experienced a frenetic politicisation based on the wider availability of newspapers, *pamphlets*, and books (Fauci and Petrizzo 2017). Those documents circulated among the population, and ideas with them, also thanks to the widespread practise of public readings. The new technique soon reached London, where the first lithographic press was installed in 1801. After twenty years, official sources mention 25 lithographic printers in the city (Twyman 1976, 10-11). In Paris, Charles-Philibert de Lasteyrie obtained the right to establish a lithographic press by the police department, and he inaugurated his activities on April 15th 1816<sup>1</sup>.

Not by chance, the first lithographic shops of Buenos Aires were animated by groups of European migrants, some drawn there by government officials

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<sup>1</sup> See Éditions en ligne de l'École des chartes. "Dictionnaire des imprimeurs-lithographes du XIXe siècle", <http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/imprimeurs/>.

during the 1820s, others attracted to the Río de la Plata by the wide opportunities of such a new country. Those people knew from their European experience about the political and performative role of images and printing words, and used their expertise in order to craft a living in the new American context. Similar developments occurred elsewhere in America. In 1825, the Swiss Johann Jacob Steinmann arrived in Rio de Janeiro to be appointed imperial lithographer by the Emperor of Brazil Pedro I. The next year, the Italian Claudio Liniati established a lithography in Mexico City, helped by government patronage. The great individual mobility of the Age of Revolutions coupled with the new role images assumed in the eyes of political power accompanied the arrival of lithography on the American shores.

John Quemby Beech and Jean Baptist Deuville were the first Europeans that tried to establish a lithography in Buenos Aires between 1825 and 1827. The scant information available does not allow us to assess why the activity did not flourish, but both the British and the French were not painters or lithographers and the lack of artistic and technical proficiency might have influenced their economic failure. Few years later, the project of a lithography in Buenos Aires was renewed.

César Hipólito Bacle (1794-1838) was born in Versoix (Switzerland). He studied drawing, cartography and natural sciences and he married Adrienne Pauline Macaire (1796-1855), a painter educated at the Académie des jeunes filles in Geneva. The life-story of Andrea sheds some light on feminine participation in social life in the republican Atlantic and in Buenos Aires in particular. In fact, besides being a major contributor to the works of the shop, she was engaged in the cultural life of the city and she opened a drawing school for young women in 1831, “at a time when the desire to learn is widespread in all classes of society” (Gluzman, Munilla Lacasa and Szir 2013). The couple travelled in Africa before settling in Buenos Aires in 1828, where they purchased the printing equipment from Deuville, and they started to offer a wide variety of printed goods, combining Bacle’s commercial acumen together with Macaire’s artistic expertise (Munilla Lacasa, Gluzman and Szir 2013; Szir 2018).

This printing press has just been moved to Calle de la Catedral N° 17, next to the Bank. There you will always find at the most moderate prices – bills of lading and of exchange in Spanish, French, English and Portuguese - lined paper for music, and various pieces of music composed by different masters of this capital - also portraits of the most famous men - views and customs of Buenos Aires - city plans - maps of the Province - the topographic plan of this Province with the delineation of all the lands, ranches and farms - monthly prize books - embroidery drawings - *Napoleon and his time*, in Castilian - paper and drawing samples - paper for markings and mourning - countless other items that can be seen in said establishment, which also make on request cards, labels, obituaries of mourning

and marriage invitation, music, circulars, facsimiles, and everything that concerns lithography (quoted by Szir 2018, 115-116).

Besides everyday consumption goods, Bacle produced two illustrated newspapers (*El Museo Americano*, 1835-1836 and *El Recopilador*, 1836), educational works (drawing and geometry classes, university coursework notes) and administrative documents (maps, topographic plans and the *Colección General de Marcas de Ganado de la Provincia de Buenos Ayres*, 1830-1835). Those printed goods reflected the commercial and social development of the city. Buenos Aires' wealth was based on trade that provided revenues for economic actors and for the state, through the custom house. Therefore, the lithography offered samples of commercial contracts, necessary to arrange exchanges, and maps of the city and the province, thanks to which it was possible to foresee and visualise commercial opportunities, both in the city and in the countryside. Some consumer goods were directed at sustaining local forms of sociability (music sheets, drawing samples), while others were meant also for foreign consumption (lithographs of landscapes and local customs).

The heterogeneity of Bacle's goods reflected the variety of foreign artists gravitating around the lithography: the painter Arthur Onslow, the illustrators Hipólito Moulin and Alfonso Fermepin, the lithographer Julio Daufresne, the cartographer Juan Francisco Guerrin and the painter Charles Henri Pellegrini. Francophone migrants stand in a central place in the development of printing culture and visual arts in Buenos Aires throughout the 19th century. Many of them were fleeing Europe after Napoleon's defeat or some revolutionary failure, and they were attracted to the Río de la Plata by the chance to employ their knowledge at the service of the state or the market (Ojeda 2019). The life-story of Charles Henri Pellegrini gives an example of the entangled histories of revolutions, practical knowledge and republicanism that shaped the Atlantic world between the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Born in Chambéry in 1800 from a middle-class family, Charles Henri Pellegrini moved to Turin in 1818 to study engineering at the university. There, he took part in the riots of 1821, when a group of military men and intellectuals tried to start a revolt against the conservative policies of king Vittorio Emanuele I. After the failure of the insurrection, he was forced to leave Piedmont and he moved to Paris, where his brother Jean-Jacques was settled. They came into contact with Juan Larrea, the diplomatic representative of Buenos Aires in France who was looking for engineers willing to move to the new American republic. In discussing about that with his brother, Carlo enthusiastically noted that "in accepting the high and honourable offices which the Government of Buenos Aires will confer upon us, it is impossible to quantify our happiness in serving a republic for whose

prosperity we have never ceased to make the most ardent wishes, as friends of a just and wise liberty” (Novella Marani 1988, 15). In addition to exotic tales about America circulating in Paris and an adventurous and enterprising individual spirit, the emotions aroused by his political faith in republicanism and freedom were among the reasons that led Charles to accept Larrea’s offer.

Pellegrini therefore arrived in Buenos Aires in the autumn of 1828, as soon as the war with the Portuguese Empire ended and the serious political crisis following the assassination of Governor Dorrego began. His protectors, members of the unitarian party, were thus considered dangerous political enemies by the new federalist government. Pellegrini had to put aside his engineering projects (a drinking water system for the city and a new port) and dedicated himself to portraiture, a talent that he discovered was in great demand during his attendance to the bourgeois salons and the *tertulias porteñas* - informal cultural gatherings. In 1831, he met Bacle and began to collaborate with his lithography. He was the main author of the drawings of *Trages Y Costumbres De La Provincia De Buenos Aires* and of many other publications. Indeed, after the dramatic death of Bacle, it was Pellegrini who tried to give new life to lithography, reopening it in 1841 under the name of *Litografía de las Artes*.

The connections between the lithographic shop and politics were intertwined since the beginning of its activities. Bacle asked the Buenos Aires government for permission to use the title of *Litografía del Estado*, a right that was granted on 27 October 1829 in exchange for a discount to the works commissioned by the state. In turn, the Swiss man actively looked at the state as one of its main commissioners. In March 1829, Bacle volunteered for publishing the *Colección General de Marcas de Ganado*, a collection of every cattle brand of the province’s landowners. The printing of cattle brands had been decided in 1825, but nobody had realised the project yet. The written request to publish the *Colección* ended with Bacle offering “its services for all lithographic works that may be required by the government” (Trostinè 1953, 55).

However, state support was not as unconditional as hoped. As newspapers became the stage of fierce political conflicts and vitriolic debates, the government decided in 1832 to forbid foreigners to run printing activities. Therefore, Bacle was forced to leave for Brazil and to transfer the administration of the lithography to José Alvarez. In 1833, he was allowed to come back after the promise that he would not publish any work dealing with politics.

The rivalry between Bacle and Pedro de Angelis offers another facet of the swinging relationship between the lithographer and the state. De Angelis was a Neapolitan intellectual who was invited to the Río de la Plata in 1827 by unitarian president Rivadavia. After the fall of the *unitarios*, he continued his career in journalism becoming the editor of *El Lucero*, a publication supporting the *federales*

then in power. De Angelis has been traditionally considered as the main publicist of the governments of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Between 1828 and 1831, *El Lucero* regularly advertised the new publications of the *Litografía del Estado*, praising its works as highly relevant for the government and the population of Buenos Aires. Bacle was described as “tireless”, as he published new political portraits and the second volume of the *Colección*. The editor noted how “this enterprise seems to us so useful and its execution so perfect, that we stimulate the zeal of all, and especially of the landowners, to favour it. We have no doubt that the government[...] will be glad to protect [this work]” (*El Lucero*, 15 Jan. 1831). The Neapolitan editor was calling rural producers and political power to support a project which could improve property rights security thanks to the technical possibilities allowed by lithographic printing.

The esteem De Angelis had for Bacle started to crack in the following years, as the advertisements for the lithography did not appear anymore in the newspaper section dedicated to the editor’s comment, but in its last page together with all the other ads (and therefore subject to payment). There is no evidence to understand what triggered the conflict between the two, but the final clash happened in 1834, when the lithographer vehemently complained to the government because of the exclusive commission for printing official publication granted to the *Tipografía del Estado*, just opened by De Angelis. He feared that the reduction in state commissions would give the final blow to the lithography, but state officials backed De Angelis, and the contract they had just signed with him. Indeed, Pedro José Agrelo, the state official that had to solve the issue, concluded that “Mr. Bacle does have the right to print only the works that the government would voluntarily entrust to him” (Trostinè 1953, 92).

Finally, the relation between Bacle and state power ended in tragedy: returning to Buenos Aires from a trip to Chile - as he was planning to translate his activities over there, he was imprisoned on charges of supporting Rosas’ political enemies, and died a few weeks after his release on 4th January 1838, a death favoured by poor conditions of detention. The relation between politics and printing was therefore Janus-faced during *rosismo*: if political patronage was sought as a source of revenues, the risk of getting involved into political struggle could lead to dramatic consequences.

### **A peculiar shade of republicanism**

The history of the lithography coincides almost perfectly with the first decade of the *rosismo* (1829-1852), the years in which Juan Manuel de Rosas was the dominant political figure in Buenos Aires. Rosas has been traditionally considered the archetype of the South American *caudillo*, an authoritarian and



paternalistic leader who based his power on violence and charismatic influence over the masses. Nowadays, historical research has advanced a more nuanced interpretation of his political rule, that highlights its peculiar traits while challenging its exceptionalism thanks to a better contextualization based on multiple sources (Fradkin and Gelman 2015). This historiographical shift reflects the contemporary refusal of the *caudillo* as the paradigm of the failed Latin American political modernisations, through detailed assessments of the various meanings the word could assume, as well as the evaluation of the varieties of political practises associated with Latin American 19th-century political experiments (Goldman and Salvatore 1998).

This reassessment is part of a new political history, which rejects the paradigm of failure as a guideline for the interpretation of the events of the independent South American countries, preferring instead to highlight the multiplicity of republican political projects that followed the contingent independence from the Spanish empire (Sabato 2018). The experience of the *rosismo*, far from being a dark parenthesis in Argentine republican history, is therefore inserted in this context of republican experiments, thanks to the focus on the analysis of political practises rather than on the evaluation of the adherence or not to supposed characteristics of an ideal model of republican government. Indeed, the concept of *república* assumed a prominent place in public debate in the Río de la Plata during the institutional crisis that led to the independence from metropolitan Spain. Historians now agree on the contingent nature of independence and on the prominence of facts over ideas in the revolutionary process (Botana 2007). The political revolution fuelled a wider cultural one, of which conceptual change was a very relevant aspect: new political vocabularies, imaginaries and practises marked the beginning of political modernity, in South America as well as in the entire Atlantic world (Sebastián Fernández 2021). After 1810, *república* was a polysemic concept. It can be considered as a form of government based on popular political participation as well as an ideal figure of civic virtue, and this double meaning lasted during the first half of the 19th century (Di Meglio 2009).

During the *rosismo*, the political practises and the form of government were in line with the Río de la Plata republican tradition. Rosas never officially gave up with popular sovereignty, sanctioned by elections and the legislative power of the Sala de Representantes, even if those institutions were partially stripped of their powers and original meaning.<sup>2</sup> However, the effort to respect the republican political practises inherited from the revolutionary decade of the 1810s was an integral part of the wide support for Rosas. Similarly, the discourses sustaining his

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<sup>2</sup> Elections took the form of plebiscites, and the Sala de Representantes limited its activities to the confirmation of the laws proposed by Rosas, especially during the 1840s.

political legitimacy were based on traditional republican tropes, such as the importance of civic virtue to maintain republican freedom, or the rhetoric of order and government of the laws (Myers 1998). Rosas inherited a repertoire of political practises and discourses and he adapted it to his contemporary political needs, as it is clear if one looks at the role of civic festivities (Salvatore 1996; Munilla Lacasa 2017). He added to this received repertoire new practises, among which the extensive use of images was a prominent one.

The organisation of political rituals went hand in hand with an early political use of images, and the lithography was central in this respect. The publication of the *Album de homenaje al Coronel Don Manuel Dorrego* was only the first work created by the lithography in support of the federalist cause. In fact, don Mariano Lozano ordered 500 portraits of Rosas in 1830 (Trostinè 1953, 35), an incredible number compared to the other lithographs part of the first project of the *Fastos de la Republica Argentina*. In announcing the forthcoming publication of the collection in July 1829, Bacle planned to publish two booklets with four portraits each, and he called the public to subscribe to this project in order to carry on the publication. However, the project did not gain the support that the Swiss was expecting, if he renovated the call for subscribers in September, adding the possibility for the buyers to choose four portraits they prefer to create individual booklets. This strategy of create-your-own-booklet was devised to meet the lack of subscribers, and in this context Lozano's order seems even more exceptional.

Therefore, since the beginning of his political career, Rosas relied on the deployment of visual representations to strengthen the political support for its government in the province, and for the federalist cause as the right political arrangement for the United provinces of the Río de la Plata. The image of Rosas was displayed in every corner of the city, as well as the one of Encarnación Ezcurra, his wife that was turned into a powerful political icon – a federalist heroine, especially after her unexpected death in 1838 (Leonardi 2012). Besides portraits of the *Restaurador de las Leyes*, images of Rosas – and Encarnación – were reproduced in a vast array of consumer goods, from vases to aprons, from gloves to *peinetones* – traditional headgears (Pradère 1914). Moreover, on February 1832 Rosas ruled the imperative for the civil servants, the military, professors and students at the university, and the trade brokers to wear a “red *punzó* badge” in order to “enshrine in the same way as the national colours the federalist emblem of this province and to consider it, not as a sign of division and hatred, but of fidelity to the cause of order and of peace, and of union among its children under the federalist system” (*Ivi*, 27-28). The badge worn by militiamen was to be embellished with a motto, “Federación o Muerte”, usually followed by “Death to the savage *unitarios*”. This iconography was printed on consumer goods in the *Litografía del Estado* (Trostiné 1953, 101).

Bacle's lithographic press created the garments which sustained the development of a federalist visual culture through a mix of fashion and political compulsion. Indeed, the red *punzó* started to be seen everywhere in the city, as noted by contemporary observers.

When a political idea chooses a colour as its emblem, and this idea prevails above all others, the colour which symbolises it soon becomes fashionable in the hands of the public opinion: everyone wishes to wear on his dress the colour which expresses the thought and the interest of all; and thus, it obtains the double authority of public approval and of fashion, which is also a public approval. Such is among us the colour of *punzó*, the emblem of the federalist idea: it is both a political colour and a fashionable colour: the people wear it on their clothes, and the power on their flags (La moda, 2 Dec. 1837).

Obviously, the support for Rosas was more contested than how it appears from the quotation. Nevertheless, the adoption of a particular dressing code – which included lithographic printed images and slogans – became part of the social practises that proved individual political allegiance. The consolidation of political support passed through the fashioning of homogeneous federalist citizenship as well as through the construction of the political enemy (the savage *unitario*). The creation of “federalist bodies” contributed to both symbolic goals (Marino 2013). Lithographic technology allowed a wider political employment of images, thanks to the possibility of printing them on clothes and other consumer goods.



Image 2. Arthur Onslow, *El Exmo. Sor. Dn. Jn. Manuel de Rosas, Gobernador y Capitán General de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1830*

The relationship between Bacle and Buenos Aires' politics worsened with time, but the lithographer continued to propose works that celebrated the federalist cause, both as a way to please the authority, both as a source of income. In 1835, he advertised the upcoming publication of the *Biografía del Exmo. Sr. General D. Manuel de Rosas*, which would also include documents pertaining to the recent successful military campaigns against the indigenous populations of the Southern pampa. During the same year, the lithography realized a famous work depicting the execution of the murderers of Juan Facundo Quiroga, leader of the Argentine province of La Rioja and an important political ally of Rosas. Finally, the *Almanque Federal* was published in 1836. It was formed by twelve portraits of federalist heroes (one for each month), a map of Buenos Aires, and lists of prominent citizens of the province. Rosas personally approved the work, whose political aims were made clear in the request of publication, as Bacle stated that "wishing to contribute as far as possible to the promotion and perpetuity of the Sacred Cause of the National Federation by recording the names and persons of its first distinguished defenders, I have conceived the idea of printing and lithographing an almanack for the immediate year of 1836" (Trostiné 1953, 103).

The extensive political use of images and printed material is an element that allows one to interpret *rosismo* as a local manifestation of Atlantic and republican political modernity. If 19th-century Latin American politics has been dominated by the narrative of failure, the comparison of practices and discourses between different localities helps in refusing this received image. The high consideration for knowledge and education was a widespread sentiment among American elites since the late colonial era Enlightenment, and the use of the printing press to educate the population exploded during the years of the wars of independence (Acree 2011; Miller 2020).

At the other side of the Atlantic, one prominent aspect of early 19th-century European political culture was a shift to a new system of mass communication based on new technologies that allowed an unprecedented reprinting and circulation of images and texts. Lithography was part of the new techniques which became instrumental for the creation of new forms of politicisation based on the printed world, being texts or everyday consumer goods that displayed mottos, catchphrases or the images of famous political leaders and heroes. The proliferation of low-cost portraits, also favoured by the extension of the market economy, contributed to the creation of a *star system*, an element that in turn was exploited instrumentally by the states that in the course of the 19th century sought to transform their citizens into a homogeneous nation (Fruci and Petrizzo 2013). Rosas used the performativity of images to foster allegiance to his government and

to the federalist movement, and this was the signal of a modern political system that required popular adherence and support in order to be legitimate.

The personalism and authoritarianism of Rosas has to be interpreted as a legacy and radicalization of the political culture of the 1820s. The polarization of Buenos Aires' politics translated into civil war after December 1828, and when the next year Rosas obtained power his first political goal was to unify a divided population. In order to reach it, the fostering of republican discourses and a federalist visual culture was a prominent aspect, as well as a modern political trait. Indeed, the federalist and the unitarian political discourses have to be studied together, because it is in their shared political practises aimed at winning the support of the people that the two become intelligible (Lanctot 2014). The rhetorical stress on the word *Federación* instead of *Republica* can be interpreted as an effort to exclude political enemies (the *unitarios*) from the political arena as illegitimates. The aim of crafting virtuous citizens was a shared political goal in the 19th-century Río de la Plata (Acree 2011), and Rosas used a new technology that was circulating in the Atlantic space (the lithography) in order to do so.

Finally, the political deployment of images to foster a shared visual culture in Buenos Aires seems in line with similar political experiments that emerged in the Atlantic world between the late 18th and the 19th centuries. It is interesting to note that the *orden rosista* understood itself as “a republican order, which was supposed to represent the highest values of social, economic and political modernity reached by the 19th century” (Myers 1995, 106). The supporters of Rosas interpreted the establishment of a modern republic in the restoration of colonial order and security, which conditions of possibility vanished after the Revolution and the chaotic years of unitarian government. Myers saw in these contradictions between old and new the element that hid the republicanism of Rosas years to the eyes of both contemporary observers and historians.

### **The lithography as a “manufacturer” of market-intermediaries**

Besides the Atlantic diffusion of shared republican political practises and forms of representation, the second wide process that sustained and was sustained by the lithography was the development of a local market economy interconnected with the global capitalist market. If economists had placed the establishment of a modern global economy as starting from the late 19th century, when technological innovations allowed global market coordination and price convergence, Atlantic economies showed signs of convergence and homogenization in ideas and practises sustaining them prior to this date. Silver and sugar were the basis of global and interconnected economies that were still formed by a loose coordination of poorly connected markets if one looks at prices (as local material

condition of production and market structures were still the fundamental aspect of price determination), but were already homogeneous in the extension of the commodity forms as the principal driving force behind their establishment and interconnection. The Atlantic economic expansion occurred during the second half of the 18th century was a common process that affected multiple localities, each one witnessing a quantitative (sometimes also qualitative as in the case of British mechanisation of production) expansion of commodity production, according to which local economic resources were more profitable to exploit and sell in the Atlantic markets.

Indeed, the pace of Buenos Aires' economic growth was impressive. Since its creation as capital of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776, an export-led economic development resulted in high rates of population growth and urbanisation (Gelman and Moraes 2015). Potosí silver was the main product exchanged with foreign consumer goods that were then re-exported to the economies of the Interior (Cordoba, Corrientes, Tucuman, Salta), creating the complex silver-based colonial economies (Sempat Assadourian 1983). Little by little, local products were commercialised for export, and those were the products on which the wealth of cattle civilization was to be built: beef hides and salted meat. The gradual liberalisation of trade meant the increasing exploitation of wild cattle, the establishment of more *estancias* and the creation of the first *saladeros*, where cattle meat was processed and salted (Montoya 1956; Amaral 1998).

The beginning of the wars of independence stressed the efficiency of the silver based political economy, and local commodities considerably increased their share in Buenos Aires export to Atlantic trading partners (Halperín Donghi 1963). The conjuncture of Napoleonic war and struggle for independence turned British merchants into the main commercial partners of the Buenos Aires merchant community during the 1810s. The city profited in an unexpected way of these connections. Between 1790 and 1820, the global economy restructured from a polycentric world (based on silver and plantations) to one centred on the only industrialising region – Britain (Tutino 2015). Buenos Aires profited from their early strong connections with British merchants, and this relationship would sustain Argentine export-led growth throughout the 19th century.

Besides the commercialization of agricultural production, the establishment of a framework of rule was a necessary condition for the development of a globally-integrated market economy (Callon 1998). External trade relations were regulated by a commercial treaty with Britain (1824), which granted rights to British subjects in Buenos Aires in exchange for the international recognition of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, and by successive reforms of custom duties. Commercial disputes among merchants were left to the authority of the Tribunal de Comercio, constituted by merchants themselves. The institutional

construction of the internal market was carried on by decrees of the Cabildo and Viceroys during colonial times, and later on by decisions of the Junta the Representantes de Buenos Aires and various national constitutional assemblies: those bodies decided the regulations on taxes, prices, licit and illicit commodities and activities, and so on.

The action of market-framing is what constitutes the boundaries of the licit market activities and through the proliferation of intermediaries such as legislation, actors and objects, it creates the social playing field through which it is possible to participate in a market economy. Market-framing aims at reducing the transaction costs through the creation of a shared space regulated by common rules in order to regulate participation and mutual benefits in the forms of acceptable individual profits. The side coin of market-framing is the inevitable concurrent creation of overflows, unintended consequences of framing that exceed the market boundaries set. The same action of establishing a law creates the possibility of infringing it, or the necessity to present a document to the authorities to licitly trade allows to present a counterfeit version of the same document. As already noted, the lithography produced many printed goods that were becoming necessary in order to participate in Buenos Aires commercial society. Samples of contracts, property rights titles, bills of exchange or maritime patents were offered to consumers willing to participate in the lively commercial life of this Atlantic port. In the next paragraph is described the printed goods that better represents the perceived need of rules and order in the marketplace, that is the *Colección General de Marcas de Ganado de la Provincia de Buenos Ayres*.

In a land-abundant context, the economic value of land-asset was scarce, therefore authorities tried to secure property rights especially on the most valuable commodity, cattle. The regulation on branding was one of the prominent ways of doing it. The practise of marking wild cattle can be traced back to the 16th century, but the deeper integration into the Atlantic market accelerated attempts of market-framing (Storni 1997). In September 1791, Virrey Arredondo issued a decree which established stricter rules for hides and cattle trade because a recent drought had worsened the chronic problem of rustling. Arredondo ruled that every hide exchanged or traded in the city should be marked with a symbol pertaining to the owner, that every exchange should be documented, that the slaughterhouses should refuse animals without branding, and so on. The punishment for misconduct were severe: a considerable fine and the confiscation of the whole lot if one single hide was not marked, or ten years of military service for artisans found guilty of creating copies of those already existing (García 1914, 123-128).

Rules were needed to secure property rights of cattle-owners, as well as to prevent contraband and to regulate the activities of the slaughterhouses that were providing meat for Buenos Aires consumption. Juan Manuel de Rosas dedicated a

section of his *Instructions to estate managers* to branding, highlighting how the operation should be carried on every year (Rosas 1943, 39). The promulgation of various pieces of legislation in this regard stands for the difficulty authorities had in law enforcement.

Finally, in 1829 the editor of *El Lucero* announced the impending publication by Bacle of a work “which will be of the utmost usefulness to the country” (*El Lucero*, 11 Sep. 1829). It was the *Colección General de Marcas de Ganado de la Provincia de Buenos Ayres*, meant to collect the brand of every Buenos Aires producer. By law, every piece of cattle and every hide had to be marked with the producer branding. It was useful both for privates and for the public authority, in the effort to frame the licit market activities through the visual representation of property rights, and the development of a visual identity for each *estancia*. In fact, it was divided into sections corresponding to each jurisdiction of Buenos Aires province, in which were collected the marks of (supposedly) every cattle producer. Describing it, the *Lucero* noted its character of a strange and enigmatic object, as “if it would be sent to a European antique dealer, hiding its origin, instead of having it for a collection of marks, he would believe it to be a page of hieroglyphics, sketched from the notebook of some traveller who had toured the Egyptian tombs” (*Lucero*, 17th June 1830). A typographic press would have not allowed the reproduction of the complex symbols which were used as brands.

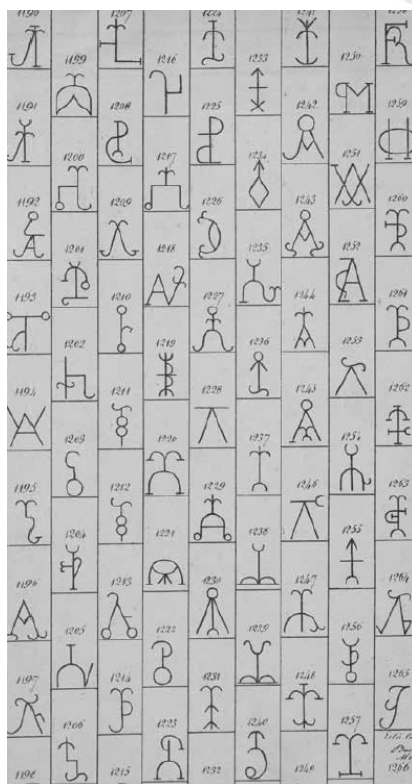


Image 3. A page from the *Colección General*.



Like many other projects, the realisation of the *Colección* did not run smoothly. Bacle ran into severe difficulties in collecting brands, as he had to rely on the willingness of cattle-owners to contribute to the project. The high production costs were borne by the *Litografía*, and he bargained with authorities to set the price for the final work during some years. In the end, the government bought 50 copies of the *Colección* for 150 pesos each, plus 50 copies of the topographic plan of the province that was created as an appendix of the cattle marks register.

Francisco Guerrin realised this important document. The creation of a detailed map of the province was a government goal since the end of the 18th century. Economic reformers such as Félix de Azara, Pedro Andrés García or Juan Hipólito Vieytes had stressed the need to collect economic, legal and morphological data on the territory in order to better craft necessary economic reforms to improve the overall productivity of the Río de la Plata economy. Maps are a fundamental market intermediary. They allow economic actors to learn about and visualise the economic opportunities that are present in a given territory, and they are used by governments to secure property rights, as maps are the building blocks of cadastres. Interestingly enough, the first period of activity of the Buenos Aires Topographic Department (1824-1835) witnessed a prominent role of land surveyors and citizens in fostering the measurement of the territory and the consequent extension of the official recognition of land entitlement (Gatreau and Garavaglia 2011). In fact, land surveyors acted as “freelancers”, paid by landholders that requested their service. The results of the land surveys were then sent to the Department that checked them and tried to impose a standard of technical rules to guarantee homogeneous measurements. Even if a precise and complete cadastre was only realised at the end of the century, these early attempts signal the development of public and private desire to foster the economic legibility of the territory, needed to participate in a market economy.



Image 4. Francisco Guerrin, *Registro gráfico de los terrenos de propiedad pública y particular de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*, 1833.

Lithography was the most suitable mean for reproducing maps at that time. In fact, contrary to traditional typography, the invention of the lithographic process allowed the easy mechanical reproduction of every kind of drawings, as the matrix for printing was not formed by movable type, but by a stone that could be engraved with whatever image. Therefore, Buenos Aires authorities commissioned to Bacle the creation of such a fundamental governmental tool and market intermediary, which utilisation was crucial in the attempt to govern the incipient market economy that was developing in the pampa. For the same reason,

lithography was fundamental for mechanically reproducing other commercial documents (contracts, property titles, bills of exchange) that were deemed necessary by nineteenth-century dramatic expansion of commercial activities. Technical reproduction allowed an increased standardization which in turn enhanced economic predictability. Therefore, lithography offered the material goods that private entrepreneurs and public powers were looking for in their shared attempt to establish interconnected markets economies.

## Conclusions

The activities of the lithography were sustained and fuelled the entangled and parallel development of a politicised visual culture and of a market economy in the new-born republic of the province of Buenos Aires. Bacle and his wife Andrea Macaire sought patronage and commissions from governments, especially through the realisation of printed goods that aimed at the celebrations of the new independent and republican political regime, as well as through documents necessary for the tentative economic government of a market society. While they never achieved the level of state patronage they would have liked, Juan Manuel de Rosas understood the importance of visual representation in a modern republican regime since the beginning of his political career, and he turned to Bacle and his lithography for the realisation of printed goods that aimed at the strengthening of the political support for his authoritative republican experiment. This story stresses the interconnected character of the Atlantic world, as the lithography was animated by a group of European migrants, attracted to the Río de la Plata by the revolutionary possibilities offered by the new-born republics. Indeed, those people were the agents that allowed the circulation of technologies and ideas in the Atlantic space, creating a world in which far-flung localities were sharing similar political practises, iconographies and forms of representation.

However, the creation of a republican visual culture was not the only social function that was performed by printed commodities. In fact, the deepening of transatlantic market-integration meant an expanded demand for consumer goods needed to participate into it, as well as an increasing legislative effort in order to frame the boundaries of the incipient local market economy. The lithography satisfied both the public and private demand for market intermediaries. Finally, the discussion has highlighted how the production of “political consumer goods” and of “commercial consumer goods” cannot be separated in the description of the *Litografía del Estado*. This micro-case study exemplifies the wider political and economic change that different Atlantic societies witnessed at the turn of the 19th century, that is the incorporation into an interconnected capitalist economic

market, whose economic modernity cannot be disconnected from a new degree of politicisation and new political practises.

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